

Message Text

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SUBJ: MEDIA COMMENT ON AMBASSADOR PORTER'S REMARKS TO
PRESS ON US/CANADIAN RELATIONS

PARIS PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

FOR ACTING SECRETARY FROM CHARGE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LEAD EDITORIAL IN GLOBE AND
MAIL DECEMBER 17 UNDER HEADING "THIN-SKINNED BOMBAST..."

BEGIN QUOTE. EVIDENTLY PRIME MINISTER PIERRE TRUDEAU
BELIEVES CANADIANS ARE SO IMMATURE THAT THEY MUST BE
SHELTERED FROM EXPOSURE TO THE VIEWS THAT MAY BE
HELD BY OTHER COUNTRIES ON THE SUBJECT OF THE RELATIONS
OF THOSE COUNTRIES WITH CANADA, AND THAT IF THOSE
VIEWS ARE TO BE EXPRESSED IT MUST BE DONE WITH THE
UTMOST DISCRETION AND SECRECY, FOR THE EARS OF HIS
GOVERNMENT ALONE.

FOR MR. TRUDEAU HAS REACTED WITH STUNNING
BRUTALITY TO THE LOW-KEY ENUMERATION BY UNITED STATES
AMBASSADOR WILLIAM PORTER, SPEAKING INFORMALLY TO A
GROUP OF REPORTERS, OF ISSUES VIEWS IN WASHINGTON AS
MATTERS OF CONCERN IN CANADA-U.S. RELATIONS.

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MR. PORTER, AT THE END OF HIS OTTAWA POSTING,

SUGGESTED A GET-TOGETHER BETWEEN MR. TRUDEAU AND PRESIDENT GERALD FORD TO DEAL WITH SUCH ISSUES AS LACK OF CLARITY OVER CANADIAN RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT, DELETION OF COMMERCIALS FROM AMERICAN TELEVISION SIGNALS CARRIED BY CANADIAN CABLE COMPANIES, THE REQUIREMENT THAT MOST COMMERCIALS BROADCAST IN CANADA BE MADE IN THIS COUNTRY, POTASH INDUSTRY NATIONALIZATION IN SASKATCHEWAN, INCREASED ENERGY EXPORT PRICES AND REMOVAL OF FAVORABLE TAX STATUS FROM TIME AND READER'S DIGEST THROUGH THE IMPOSITION OF CONTENT CONTROLS.

MR. PORTER MADE NO ATTEMPT TO TELL CANADA WHAT TO DO ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS. HE MERELY TOLD REPORTERS THAT THEY WERE MATTERS OF CONCERN, MOST OF WHICH HE HAD TAKEN UP WITH THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT. WHICH IS PRECISELY WHAT HE WAS SENT TO OTTAWA TO DO.

MR. TRUDEAU'S FIRST REACTION WAS TO TRY TO BRUSH OFF MR. PORTER, THE MOST SENIOR AMERICAN DIPLOMAT EVER POSTED TO OTTAWA, AS A MAN TALKING OFF THE TOP OF HIS HEAD. THE AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS, MR. TRUDEAU SAID, "DO NOT CORRESPOND TO WHAT EITHER THE PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY (HENRY) KISSINGER HAVE BEEN TELLING ME."

BUT THIS EFFORT WAS QUICKLY SHOT DOWN BY THE UNITED STATES STATE DEPARTMENT"... THERE IS A GROWING UNEASE ABOUT THE ISSUES HE MENTIONED, AND HE REFLECTED THAT WE DO HAVE SOME CONCERNS ON SOME ISSUES-AND THESE HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED TO THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT."

BUT MR. TRUDEAU WENT FURTHER, USING WHAT IN DIPLOMACY IS WILDLY INTEMPERATE LANGUAGE HE SAID THAT MR. PORTER HAD GONE "BEYOND THE ACCEPTABLE BOUNDS WITHIN WHICH AN AMBASSADOR SHOULD STAY." BY THUS DESCRIBING THEM AS UNACCEPTABLE MR. TRUDEAU USED TO REBUFF MR. PORTER'S MILD REMARKS THE PRECISE LANGUAGE USED BY THE LATE PRIME MINISTER LESTER PEARSON TO REBUKE PRESIDENT CHARLES DE GAULLE FOR HIS SHOUT OF "VIVE LE QUEBEC LIBRE" IN 1967.

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THUS MR. TRUDEAU RANKS A DISCREET EXPRESSION OF CONCERN BECAUSE IT WAS UTTERED WITHIN THE HEARING OF THE CANADIAN PEOPLE, AS HARSHLY AS MR. PEARSON PROPERLY TREATED A SERIOUS ATTEMPT TO BREAK THE COUNTRY IN TWO. AND THIS TOUCHY AND GROSS BOORISHNESS WAS UNDERLINED BY THE FAILURE OF MEMBERS OF THE TRUDEAU CABINET TO APPEAR AT A FAREWELL PARTY FOR MR. PORTER TO WHICH THEY HAD BEEN INVITED.

IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE THAT MR. TRUDEAU WANTS CANADIANS TO HEAR NOTHING ON THE SUBJECT OF U.S.-CANADIAN RELATIONS EXCEPT WHAT HIS GOVERNMENT CHOOSES TO TELL US. WHAT IS STARTLING IS THE SHABBINESS OF HIS BEHAVIOR WHEN THIS PASSION FOR SECRECY IS FRUSTRATED BY A GOOD AMBASSADOR DOING HIS JOB. PERHAPS EVEN THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED; WITH THIS GOVERNMENT IT HAS BECOME A TIME-HONORED TRADITION TO SEIZE EVERY CHANCE FOR A CHEAP SHOT AT UNCLE SAME. END QUOTE.

2. IN THE SAME ISSUES OF BLOE AND MAIL, COLUMNIST GEOFFREY STEVENS FOLLOWED UP HIS DECEMBER 16 (OTTAWA 4701) COLUMN WITH ANOTHER ENTITLED "EVERYTHING IS HUNKY-DORY" IN WHICH HE CRITICIZED GOC REACTION IN TONGUE-IN-CHEEK STYLE AND RAISED THREE "PUZZLING THINGS": BEGIN QUOTE

FIRST, MR. TRUDEAU'S INSISTENCE THAT BECAUSE PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAVE SAID RELATIONS BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES ARE IN GOOD SHAPE, AMBASSADOR PORTER HAS TO BE WRONG. COULDN'T ALL THREE BE RIGHT? CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES PROBABLY HAVE AS GOOD A RELATIONSHIP AS ANY TWO COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD. BUT MR. PORTER IS INVOLVED IN THE DAY-TO-DAY MANIFESTATIONS OF THAT GOOD RELATIONSHIP AND HE SEES THE PROBLEMS THAT DO EXIST AND HE IS SENSITIVE, BECAUSE IT IS HIS JOB, TO THE ATTITUDES THAT BUSINESSMEN, THE PRESS AND THE CONGRESS IN HIS COUNTRY HAVE TOWARD CANADA.

THE SECOND PUZZLING THING IS THE PRIME MINISTER'S ASSERTION THAT MR. PORTER WAS SPEAKING WITHOUT THE UNCLASSIFIED

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AUTHORITY OF HIS GOVERNMENT. IT IS KNOWN THAT THE AMBASSADOR SOUGHT AND OBTAINED THE APPROVAL OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT BEFORE HE MADE HIS COMMENTS ON SATURDAY NIGHT. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS SINCE SAID PUBLICLY THAT IT IS, IN FACT, CONCERNED ABOUT THE THINGS MR. PORTER MENTIONED.

THE THIRD PUZZLING THING IS THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT EVEN IF THE PROBLEMS DO EXIST, MR. PORTER SHOULD HAVE RAISED THEM THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS, NOT BY TALKING TO THE PRESS. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, ALL OF THE IRRITANTS HE MENTIONED ON SATURDAY NIGHT (WITH ONE EXCEPTION) HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN TAKEN UP EITHER BY THE AMBASSADOR OR BY OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS, WITH THE APPROPRIATE CANADIAN OFFICIALS. THE ONE EXCEPTION

IS THE TIME-READER'S DIGEST SITUATION. U.S.
OFFICIALS HAVE MADE NO FORMAL REPRESENTATION ON THIS
MATTER BECAUSE THE TWO MAGAZINES ASKED THEM NOT TO.
END QUOTE. LEARY

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